

Department of Safety

The Tennessee Department of Safety (TDOS) was established in 1939 by the General Assembly to exercise the authority of the Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP). During its 67 years of sustained progress and service, the department has evolved into a multi-faceted agency that now provides four main areas of service: law enforcement services, motorist and vehicle services, education and training services, and administrative support services. While each area performs distinctly different functions, they all work together toward the common goal of ensuring public safety.

Though the primary focus is on highway safety, the department's services extend to virtually everyone within the state's borders, including motorists and passengers, commercial motor vehicle firms and operators, other state and local law enforcement agencies, students and teachers, attorneys and courts, financial institutions, insurance companies, automobile dealers, employers, and the news media.

Approximately half of the employees are commissioned law enforcement officers. The department has a strong local presence throughout the state with its eight patrol districts and 46 driver license stations, and with the county clerks who serve as the department's agents for driver licensing services.

Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) since 1999, the department is recognized as an outstanding law enforcement agency demonstrating excellence in management service by meeting an established set of professionally developed criteria. The Department of Safety's programs touch virtually everyone in the state: neighbors, family, and friends. The vital nature of the department's legislative mandates makes it especially important for TDOS to be at the forefront of responsive, effective public service.

Mission Statement

Through education, regulation, and enforcement the Department of Safety ensures the overall safety and welfare of the public.

Goals

1. By FY 2011, the fatality rate on Tennessee roadways will have an overall decrease of 10%.
2. By FY 2011, improve the level of customer service provided to all Tennessee Department of Safety customers by increasing the number of services available online, collecting baseline survey information from key customer groups, and enhancing the quality of resources available to the public via the department's web site.
3. By FY 2011, at least 80% of crash and court records will be received electronically, rather than by paper, in an effort to improve the timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of vital traffic records.
4. Through FY 2011, the department will maintain an employee turnover rate of no more than 10%.

Goal 1

By FY 2011, the fatality rate on Tennessee roadways will have an overall decrease of 10%.

Strategies for Achieving Goal 1

1. **Education:** Provide a comprehensive, data-based safety education program to communities, schools, and motor carriers.
2. **Regulation:** Improve the management of problem drivers through such means as electronic storage and retrieval of crash and violation records, as well as through analysis of the effectiveness of various elements of the current system.
3. **Enforcement:** Increase the number and variety of preventive enforcement initiatives, using data-driven targets to allocate resources in the most optimum manner.
4. **Technology:** Provide the infrastructure, technological resources, and leadership to promote interoperability, modernize statewide telecommunications, and implement technological solutions for the business processes related to enforcement, for our own department, as well as our partners in state government and law enforcement.
5. **Partnership:** Work with local law enforcement and other government agencies to promote cooperation in reducing highway fatalities through education and regulation.

Performance Measure

1. Fatality Rate: Number of fatalities per 100 million vehicular miles traveled.

FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
1.71*	1.68	1.64	1.61	1.58	1.55

*Based on preliminary data, with data projected to include expected delayed fatalities.

2. Large Truck Fatality Rate: Number of fatalities involving large trucks per 100 million commercial vehicular miles traveled (CVMT).

FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
2.24*	2.20	2.15	2.11	2.07	2.03

*Based on preliminary data, with data projected to include expected delayed fatalities.

Goal 2

By FY 2011, improve the level of customer service provided to all Tennessee Department of Safety customers by increasing the number of services available online, collecting baseline survey information from key customer groups, and enhancing the quality of resources available to the public via the department's website.

Strategies for Achieving Goal 2

1. Extend the existing survey of customers who use the Internet for driver license renewal services to those using all departmental Internet transactions.

2. Develop a sampling plan and separate survey tools to gauge the general public's satisfaction with safety on Tennessee's roadways.
3. Build targeted surveys for other key stakeholders, including groups such as students participating in the department's DARE program, citizens enrolled in motorcycle rider education courses, TDOS employees, local law enforcement agencies, the courts, and motor carriers.
4. Provide additional services online for customers to conduct business transactions with various groups within the department.
5. Enhance the quality and quantity of information available to Tennessee citizens on the department's website.

Performance Measure

1. Number of key customer groups/stakeholders for whom baseline survey information has been collected.

FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
3	4	6	8	Not applicable	Not applicable

2. Number of services available by Internet.

FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
11	12	13	14	15	16

Goal 3

By FY 2011, at least 80% of crash and court records will be received electronically, rather than by paper, in an effort to improve the timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of vital traffic records.

Strategies for Achieving Goal 3

1. Promote and encourage courts and law enforcement agencies to submit all crash and court records electronically.
2. Equip patrol cars with computers and convert the Uniform Traffic Crash Report from a scanned paper-based report to an electronic report for the highway patrol (historically the agency with the highest volume of crash reports); enable other local law enforcement agencies to report crashes electronically.
3. Support national standards for data element definitions to enable more effective electronic exchanges of information.
4. Provide the means for other highway safety data to be submitted electronically, including such records as third-party sources of testing/compliance data (instructors at commercial motor vehicle training programs, motorcycle rider education programs, DUI schools, driver improvement schools, driver education programs).
5. Extend the ability to report commercial motor vehicle inspections electronically so that all highway patrol members have this capability; develop the means for THP to send tickets to courts electronically.

6. Analyze the feasibility of receiving insurance information electronically.

Performance Measure

1. Percent of crash and Tennessee court records transmitted electronically, rather than with paper.

FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
61%	72%	75%	78%	81%	84%

Goal 4

Through FY 2011, the department will maintain an employee turnover rate of no more than 10%.

Strategies for Achieving Goal 4

1. Establish a new employee orientation program that includes defined procedures, as well as online resources.
2. Improve the employee selection process by an active recruitment campaign, and by working with the Tennessee Department of Personnel, refine employment examinations and classification-compensation.
3. Assess training needs to provide the learning opportunities required for employee growth and skill development.
4. Provide opportunities for employees to give open, honest, and frequent feedback.

Performance Measures

1. Turnover rate for all TDOS employees, including voluntary and involuntary separations, as well as retirements.

FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%

Additional Agency Information

Statutory and Constitutional Objectives

In 1939, the Tennessee Department of Safety was established under TCA 4-3-2001 *et seq.*, with the general authority to assume and exercise the powers and duties of the Tennessee Highway Patrol under TCA 4-7-101 *et seq.* The commissioner of Safety was granted the authority to establish and to promulgate such rules and regulations governing the administration and operation of the department as deemed necessary. Over the years, the specific statutory mandates for the administration of the department have expanded to reflect the duties added to the department, as summarized in the following program synopses:

Driver License Issuance / Financial Responsibility. The Classified and Commercial Driver's License Act (TCA Title 55 Chapter 50) provides the statutory mandates governing Driver License Issuance; 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) regulates the Commercial Driver License Program; and TCA Title 39 Chapter 17 governs the Handgun Carry Permit process. The specific public safety need to protect the public from financially irresponsible and hazardous drivers is detailed in (TCA Title 55, Chapters 10 and 12, 55-50-501-502 and 55-50-505).

Highway Patrol. TCA 4-3-2001 *et seq.* and TCA 4-7-107 set forth the duty of the Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) to patrol the state highways and enforce all traffic laws; TCA 4-7-105 spells out their duty to enforce motor carrier laws (further defined in TCA Title 65, Chapter 15). TCA 4-7-114 charges the THP to aid in the enforcement of anti-theft laws (as provided by TCA Title 55, Chapter 5 and TCA 39-14-108).

In addition, federal laws and regulations governing this program include the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the Surface Transportation Act of 1982, and Federal Motor Carrier Rules in the Code of Federal Register (CFR), specifically 49 CFR Part 40 300-399, 571, 23 CFR Part 658, and 49 CFR Part 171-180.

Auto-Theft. TCA 55-5-108 *et seq.* specifies that property forfeited under the specific conditions outlined therein may be sold, with the proceeds retained by the department for use in vehicle investigations. The Legal Division administers asset forfeiture cases that arise out of the seizure of property pursuant to the Drug Contract Act (TCA 39-17, Part 4 and TCA 53-11-201 451 *et seq.*) and the anti-theft provisions of TCA 55-5-108 *et seq.*

Driver Education. TCA 67-4-606 requires Driver Education to promote safety of the highways. The authorization to set standards for and issue licenses to qualified instructors and commercial driving schools are set forth in TCA 55-19-101.

Motorcycle Rider Education (MREP). TCA 55-51-102 *et seq.* requires MREP to set standards and administer motorcycle rider training courses and instructor training and development.

Obstacles to Meeting Objectives and Delivering Services and Means of Overcoming Obstacles

Obstacle 1 – Aging equipment, increasingly burdensome upgrades, and difficulty locating replacement parts have introduced additional expenses and labor-intensive processes that at times hinder the ability to deliver services effectively. The inability to communicate by radio with other emergency/law enforcement programs and limitations with voice and data communications systems represent key obstacles for enforcement and management. Coordination with other agencies today relies upon relays among and between dispatchers. Radio equipment and most towers the department's commissioned members rely upon can only be repaired with cannibalized parts. There are also a number of "dead spots" across the state, where signals are not available. Data that officers need regarding drivers, vehicles, and crime information is only available through the dispatchers. Report data is paper-based and thus delayed.

The department is moving aggressively toward real-time data communications. This includes building the 800 Megahertz (MHz) towers as quickly as federal money permits, and converting paper reports to electronic reports. The department is providing laptops in patrol cars so that access to vital driver and vehicle information, as well as commercial vehicle inspections and crashes, are electronically communicated immediately. TDOS has implemented a means of

connecting various sources of government and business data, named the Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks (CVISN), which allows all commercial motor vehicle stakeholders to exchange information and conduct business transactions electronically. A Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is being expanded in phases to serve the whole state. This system improves the ability of communications dispatchers to handle emergency calls, while also providing improved resource management, such as staff allocations and assignments. Altogether, CAD will not only enhance trooper/officer safety but also will capture key data electronically and streamline the largely manual report process.

Obstacle 2 – Federal and local law enforcement communities, as well as insurance companies, increasingly rely on timely information from Driver License and Financial Responsibility programs to help fight motor vehicle related crimes such as auto-theft, fraud, as well as crimes involving identity theft. Federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Transportation, state agencies, such as the Tennessee Department of Transportation, Governor’s Office of Highway Safety, and local police and sheriff offices, rely on the crash records provided by the department to reduce motor vehicle related fatalities, injuries, and property damage. Timely and accurate crash records are needed for trend analyses, forecasting, planning, resource allocation, manpower allocation, and to identify repeat traffic offenders. Without new equipment and recommended upgrades to vendor technology, delivering services at quality performance levels will continue to be hampered.

The department has added new business processes and established partnerships with other state agencies to perform work that was less time-sensitive. Through a partnership with the Tennessee Rehabilitative Initiative in Correction (TRICOR), the Financial Responsibility has outsourced the time-consuming process of microfilming, which frees up staff time for actual examination work, and also avoids costly replacement of aging equipment. The Crash Records and Financial Responsibility programs are continuing to work with local law enforcement agencies and local courts on electronic submission of documents. As of 2006, 70 of the 700 courts in the state were sending electronic records. The electronic submission of documents such as dispositions, citations, and crash reports reduces posting time and has proven to have fewer errors. The more timely and accurate the data TDOS has to work with, the more targeted the enforcement can be.

Obstacle 3 – The department is experiencing a significant increase in the volume of inquiries submitted via the web and email. While the use of email for communicating with state government is to be encouraged, the lack of authorized TDOS personnel able to adequately respond to the range of requests often requires the department to divert seasoned, highly-skilled officers and administrators from enforcement and regulatory efforts. As new legislation is enacted, non-traditional/trendy motor vehicles are put on the market (scooters, ATV’s, etc.), or highly charged media events occur, the demand for electronic response grows. Because of the complexity and sensitive nature of many inquiries, the department is finding the balance between responding expeditiously, and continuing to deliver mandated services, to be daunting at best. In addition to staff within the various divisions who have been given the responsibility of answering day-to-day email, many of the department’s chief administrators spend an inordinate amount of time responding to the more unique emails.

TDOS is committed to providing timely and satisfactory customer service to citizens. In the past year, in an effort to make the department more accountable to Tennessee citizens, a Correspondence Tracking System (CTS) has been designed and implemented to track the hundreds of inquiries, concerns, and suggestions that are received by the departments each week. The department has also developed surveys to seek feedback from citizens who have had contact with Tennessee Highway Patrol Troopers and the staff in the Driver License stations. The

department will continue to work proactively with media outlets to ensure that the true intent of motor vehicle related laws, rules, and policies are communicated to the public. Where possible, the department has begun training key staff to respond to more of the complex or sensitive inquiries.

Obstacle 4 – Attracting, retaining, and training quality employees continues to be a challenge for the department, particularly as a sizeable group of employees reaches retirement age. High turnover in several of the department’s key program areas has proven costly and compromised the ability to deliver services effectively. As the agency faces significant competition from private industry, government entities, and other law enforcement agencies, salaries and benefits of both commissioned and non-commissioned personnel will need to remain competitive and adequate to aid recruitment efforts and compete for top quality employees. As the landscape of “high-tech” crimes evolves, citizens demand more services, and the need for timely and accurate information increases, TDOS personnel will have to develop skills to meet criminal and operational challenges of the future.

The Tennessee Department of Safety strives to create a highly skilled workforce that provides opportunity for growth and development of its employees. TDOS will continue to evaluate training and skill enhancement alternatives as well as provide professional development opportunities that are beneficial to both the department and the individual. Directors are encouraged to pursue non-traditional avenues of delivering training, such as distance learning and web-based training. The Human Resources Division is also in the process of developing computer-based orientation for both new employees and supervisors. TDOS will continue to work with the Department of Personnel to develop examinations, compensation, and classifications that position the TDOS to deliver services in the most efficient manner possible.

Means of Maximizing Federal and Other Non-State Sources of Revenue

In FY 2006-07, TDOS expects to generate \$66 million in revenues. Approximately 46% of these revenues are designated as departmental revenues and 54% of the revenues are remitted to the general fund.

The Department of Safety actively seeks to meet the requirements for federal funds and to seek federal grants, most notably through the Governor’s Highway Safety Office (GHSO), the Office of Criminal Justice, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and the Office of Homeland Security. Based on projections for the current fiscal year, the amount of federal grant funding will increase to more than \$10 million, or approximately triple the federal grant funding received six years ago. As a result of merging the Commercial Vehicle Operations function into the Tennessee Highway Patrol, and the resulting additional manpower to enforce commercial vehicles, there should be additional grant funds available to fund this increased enforcement of commercial vehicles.

In addition, the department has several major sources of non-state revenue, which fund a portion of Safety’s budget through current services fees. Included are reinstatement fees for those drivers with revoked driver licenses, Motor Vehicle Reports (MVRs), which are copies of driving records sold primarily to insurance companies, application fees for driver licenses, and handgun permit fees. These four sources account for approximately \$25 million in revenue and, along with federal grants, fund the major portions of the Driver License Issuance (72%) and Technical Services (75%) programs. In order to maximize revenues and make services more accessible to

the public, TDOS offers on-line renewal of driver licenses and duplicate driver licenses, as well as the on-line reinstatements for driver licenses.

In addition to current services fees, the department receives dedicated funds for several programs, some covering more of the actual costs than others. Three are worth noting in this context: First, Cost Bonds, required as a prerequisite for asset forfeiture cases and collected by the Legal Division, fund approximately 30% of the budget of the Legal Division. Second, fees derived from the issuance of motorcycle registrations and motorcycle driver licenses provide 100% of the state appropriation required to operate the Motorcycle Rider Education Program. Similarly, the Driver Education program receives a share of litigation tax from citations issued on the state's highways, which also provides 100% of the state appropriation required for operation. Though the fund has been depleted over the years, there has been sufficient growth in revenue to fund basic highway safety educational efforts.

In summary, the department will continue to search for additional funding sources, both federal and non-state. To the extent possible, the department will also seek to generate additional revenues through technological advances that make services more readily accessible to the public.

Means of Avoiding Unnecessary Costs and Expenditures

In addition to standard internal audit and cost control efforts, the commissioner's office meets regularly with senior staff to identify further efficiencies. Budget variance reports are issued monthly to the managers in each program area so they can determine if expenditures and revenues are within budgeted amounts. All purchases require section head approval; all purchases over \$2,000 require the commissioner's approval.

Operational management techniques are used to analyze workflow and identify inefficiencies. Flexible staff assignments are used to avoid overtime. Moving away from paper transactions toward electronic ones is anticipated to result in cost-savings, as will moving toward more availability of Internet services for citizens and businesses. Wherever possible, the department encourages like functions to coordinate their operations

With the use of third party sources, TDOS is able to eliminate overhead costs associated with maintaining the department's own facility and personnel in several areas. As an example, the department has partnered with county clerks to issue driver licenses, and promotes the use of third-party testers to shorten the service time for applicants who would normally have to wait for a test at the stations. Other partnerships have enabled the department to provide child restraint devices and motorcycle helmets that meet federal safety standards, at no cost for training sessions, as well as to individuals who might otherwise not be able to afford them. Along similar lines, holding joint operations with other law enforcement agencies multiplies the effectiveness of the operation while holding down costs for each.

In other areas, reducing new cadet training from six months to four months has achieved a 32% savings. Based on efficiencies in managing the department's data processing services, Office for Information Resources (OIR) billings have been reduced by approximately 10%, which generated savings of approximately \$750,000 in the past three fiscal years. Due to an increased effort on the part of the department to conserve resources by purchasing only those office supplies required and to maintain a minimal inventory of supplies on hand until the next reorder cycle, TDOS has achieved a reduction of approximately 40% in expenditures for such supplies over the past four fiscal years, for a combined savings of over \$1.5 million. Smaller, but cumulatively significant

savings, have also been achieved by such actions as eliminating 100 pagers (saving \$20,000 a year) and switching from overnight delivery to regular mail to deliver commercial registrations (saving \$60,000 a year).

Finally, the department has a new emphasis on cross-training personnel, to make better use of existing resources. New initiatives include highway patrol members undertaking training so that all are able to perform the functions of the previously separated duties related to commercial motor vehicles and to crash investigations; pupil transportation inspectors taking a comprehensive approach so that each can not only inspect both school buses and day care vans, but can also train the drivers; and extending the “one-stop” concept for drivers reinstating their driver licenses, so that not only can drivers complete the process at selected driver license stations from start to finish, but they can also do so at the reinstatement offices in Memphis and Nashville.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

Reducing highway fatalities requires elements both within and beyond the department’s control. TDOS knows that enforcement, education, and regulation are key components and believes that the new structuring of the department will enable more effective, comprehensive highway safety campaigns.

At the same time, there are local and national trends that must be considered, as well as factors not within the department’s control. Strained local budgets and a new emphasis on community policing are two such trends observed at the city and county levels. Both of these combine to mean that local law enforcement agencies are increasingly relying upon the highway patrol to work the crashes in their jurisdiction, while some have discussed turning primary patrolling responsibilities over to the THP.

On a national level, highway fatalities have been increasing due to factors not yet fully understood. Rollovers, road departures, and crashes at intersections are increasing, as are crashes involving SUV’s and motorcycles. Tennessee is carefully analyzing these trends, and working diligently to implement data system improvements so that the analysis of such events is based on more “real-time” data.

The components for improving highway safety that are outside the department’s control include engineering, emergency services, and the automobile industry itself. The department is renewing its efforts to collaborate with the work of these partners in very specific ways. As an example, TDOS and TDOT have agreed to share a common agency goal (Goal 1).

At all levels of government, the heightened requirements for homeland security have an impact on the department’s ability to carry out its core mission. Reallocating staff resources to fulfill homeland security needs places a strain on carrying out everyday duties for law enforcement personnel, as well as other departments such as records and licensing personnel.

As first responders, the Highway Patrol needs additional training and equipment to address the new threats they encounter on the highways. The need for such improvements as interoperable communication systems is widely recognized to be a critical issue and is listed as a top priority. Hopefully, the attention from this issue will provide an opportunity to upgrade the existing technology within the department.

The U.S. Patriot Act includes more stringent qualifications for commercial drivers, including background checks, which will affect the operations of Driver License Issuance. The Identity Theft Trafficking statute will require staff resources from both the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and Financial Responsibility.

The Real ID Act was passed in May 2005 by the United States Congress. This legislation will have a great impact on the Driver License Issuance division leading up to its implementation in 2008. The Real ID Act will require driver's license applicants to provide an original birth certificate, passport, or other valid documentation that shows birth date, social security number, name, and address. The Department of Safety will be required to verify the legitimacy of these documents and digitally store images of them in a database.

Implementation of these new federally mandated processes is expected to cost millions of dollars and will initially result in longer wait times at DL offices. Required features for the new identifications include a common, machine-readable technology as well as physical security features designed to prevent tampering, counterfeiting or duplication of the document for fraudulent purposes. In addition to major information systems upgrades, additional training for all DL Examiners will be necessary in order for the state to be in compliance with the new federal standards. It is anticipated that during the first cycle of DL renewals under the Act, all citizens will be required to visit a DL station for document verification purposes, resulting in a decline in the volume of internet service transactions for the Department of Safety.

While improving highway safety and homeland security are major means for TDOS to contribute to the administration's priority to create safe and healthy communities, the department is also involved with supporting the administration's specific priority to address the growing threat of methamphetamine laboratories in Tennessee. The department has eight clandestine certified agents participating on the Methamphetamine Laboratory Task Force. As the threat of these labs grows, the involvement of the department's agents is likely to also grow, requiring a reallocation of resources.

Just as there are both challenges and opportunities related to ensuring public safety, there are both challenges and opportunities related to delivering a high level of service to the department's customers. One of the most potentially fruitful challenges is finding a way to increase the public's usage of the services now on the department's website. The more people and businesses do their transactions on-line, the better position the department is in to serve those who must be seen in person, or responded to individually. This is undoubtedly true for other state agencies, as well. However, each agency is in a position of having limited funds to launch an effective awareness campaign. For example, TDOS is printing posters, mailers and new envelopes promoting www.tennessee.gov, but these efforts are rather limited compared to what would be possible with more funds. An opportunity exists, therefore, for state government as a whole to help everyone by investing in a statewide public awareness campaign of the state's website.

Addressing an ever-growing volume of work presents challenges to the department's delivery of customer services, and requires well-grounded technological solutions as well as a thoughtful analysis of current business processes. Exploring ways to offer citizens a variety of means of conducting their business with the department may require some investments, but these are expected to result in ways of doing more with less.

Fees set aside and available for specific services are becoming less sufficient for covering program costs. For example, as described above, the trend seen with increased motorcyclist fatalities presents a challenge for increasing the training made available to motorcyclists. Existing programs, for the first time ever, are not able to accommodate students as readily as in the past.

Getting the message out to the public in an effective timely manner is an annual challenge. While the department's share of the litigation tax set aside for these purposes is sufficient for basic safety education initiatives, the challenge is to get the new required messages out, while also targeting specific populations with more than just pens, pencils, and brochures.